

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

### 1. Name of Property

historic name Robertson Family Farm  
other names/site number N/A

### 2. Location

street & number 2715 Newsom Road N/A ☐ not for publication  
city or town Whiteville ☒ vicinity  
stat Tennessee code TN county Hardeman code 069 zip code 38075  
e \_\_\_\_\_

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☒ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set for in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date  
State Historic Preservation Officer, Tennessee Historical Commission  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. (☐ See Continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date  
\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- ☐ entered in the National Register.  
☐ See continuation sheet

- ☐ determined eligible for the  
National Register.  
☐ See continuation sheet

- ☐ determined not eligible for the  
National Register

- ☐ removed from the National  
Register.

- ☐ other, (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

|       |       |
|-------|-------|
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |

Robertson Family Farm  
Name of Property

Hardeman County, TN  
County and State

## 5. Classification

### Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- ☒ private  
☐ public-local  
☐ public-State  
☐ public-Federal

### Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- ☐ building(s)  
☒ district  
☐ site  
☐ structure  
☐ object

### Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in count)

Contributing

Noncontributing

4

2

buildings

1

sites

structures

objects

5

2

Total

### Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

### Number of Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

## 6. Function or Use

### Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC-single family dwelling

AGRICULTURE-agricultural outbuilding

AGRICULTURE-agricultural field

### Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC-single family dwelling

AGRICULTURE-agricultural outbuilding

AGRICULTURE-agricultural field

## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER: Gabled-El Plan

### Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick, Concrete block

walls Weatherboard

roof Asphalt shingle

other Wood, Brick

### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Robertson Family Farm  
Name of Property

Hardeman County, TN  
County and State

## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☒ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☐ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

### Criteria Considerations N/A

(Mark "x" in all boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- ☐ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ **B** removed from its original location.
- ☐ **C** a birthplace or grave.
- ☐ **D** a cemetery.
- ☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ **F** a commemorative property
- ☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

### Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Agriculture  
Ethnic Heritage-African American

### Period of Significance

1906-1944

### Significant Dates

1906, 1933

### Significant Person

(complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

### Cultural Affiliation

N/A

### Architect/Builder

Robertson, Crawford

### Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

### Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

### Previous documentation on file (NPS): N/A

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ Previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey  
# \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering  
Record # \_\_\_\_\_

### Primary location of additional data:

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State Agency
- ☐ Federal Agency
- ☐ Local Government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other

Name of repository:

Robertson Family Farm  
Name of Property

Hardeman County, TN  
County and State

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 152.9 acres Whiteville 431 SW, Bolivar West 431 SE

### UTM References

(place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

|   |      |         |          |
|---|------|---------|----------|
| 1 | 16   | 306425  | 3913730  |
|   | Zone | Easting | Northing |
| 2 | 16   | 306384  | 3912860  |

|   |      |         |          |
|---|------|---------|----------|
| 3 | 16   | 307517  | 3912806  |
|   | Zone | Easting | Northing |
| 4 | 16   | 307552  | 3913681  |

☐ See continuation sheet

### Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

### Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Linda Higgins, Evelyn Robertson, and Renee Tavares  
organization Southwest Tennessee Development District date 5/15/2007  
street & number 27 Conrad Drive, Suite 150 telephone 731-668-6420  
city or town Jackson state TN zip code 38305

### Additional Documentation

submit the following items with the completed form:

### Continuation Sheets

### Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

### Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

### Additional items

(Check with the SHPO) or FPO for any additional items

## Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Evelyn C. Robertson, Jr.  
street & number 2665 Newsom Road telephone 731-668-6402  
city or town Whiteville state TN zip code 38075

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listing. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*)

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P. O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20303.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 1Robertson Family Farm  
Hardeman County, Tennessee**Narrative Description**

The Robertson Farm is located approximately one-half mile northeast of the town of Whiteville (pop. 4,640), Hardeman County, Tennessee on Newsom and May roads. The topography is flat with tree areas, two remnant orchard fields, and a small pond, but most of the land is clear where row crops are planted. The farm consists of an irregular, gabled-ell, frame farmhouse built in 1906, which is located on the west side of Newsom Road, and is set about 150- 200 feet from the road. An ell shaped home (used by tenant farmers) that was built by 1933 is on the east side of Newsom Road and is set about 100 – 150 feet from the road, and a modern ranch style home built in 1964, which is non-contributing, is on the west side of Newsom Road and is set about 100 feet from Newsom Road, just south of the frame farmhouse home structure. The storage buildings are located in various areas of the farm, one 8 feet by 8 feet storage unit is located 100 feet from the frame farmhouse, a barn is located 50 feet north of a pond, and a storage unit is located 100 feet north of the tenant home.

**Inventory****1. Home House (1906) Contributing Building**

Built by Crawford Robertson in 1906, this irregular, gabled-ell, wide-eave, frame farmhouse is a one-story building with stretcher course brick rows and concrete blocks forming the foundation, asphalt shingles on the roof and weatherboard siding on the walls. The farmhouse contains two central chimneys associated with living space in the building.

The east, front, façade of the building, which faces Newsom Road, is three bays wide and has two front gables. The gable in the north bay projects slightly to the east. The north and south bays each have an original one-over-one double-hung window. This façade includes an original central wood entrance door along with a decorative metal scroll screen door which replaced a wood screen door in 1950. The front features a three-quarter porch with two brick steps with shell aggregate concrete treads leading to a concrete slab porch floor. The roofline of the porch is an extended shed with three square wood piers on brick bases. Applied ornamentation has been added to the top of each pier. The porch has two additional brick bases with no additional wood piers. There is a brick-paver path that leads from the parking area to the front porch. A carport addition, c. 1975, extends south from the house. It features a side gable roof with ornamental metal pole piers on a brick wall that extends from south edge of the porch.

The north façade foundation consists of alternating brick piers and rows of concrete blocks. There are two one-over-one double-hung windows. The windows have simple wood surrounds. An interior brick chimney is visible on the peak of the roof. Also visible on the north façade is a recessed rear ell section composed of a porch that was enclosed c. 1970. The east end of the porch has two screened openings and a metal and glass door. The west half of the porch was converted to a kitchen pantry and is a blank weatherboard wall.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2

Robertson Family Farm  
Hardeman County, Tennessee

The west façade foundation consists of alternating brick piers and concrete block rows. The west façade of the main section of the house contains one large window on the northernmost section that is a one-over-one double-hung sash. The southernmost window is one half the size of the northernmost window and is a two-over-two double-hung sash window. This southernmost window is part of the c. 1970 enclosed porch. The west façade of the rear ell also contains two windows; the northernmost window of this part is a four-over-four double-hung sash and is three-quarters the size of the southern window, while the southern window is a one-over-one double-hung sash. The northernmost window of the rear ell is in the c. 1970 enclosed porch.

The south facade foundation consists of alternating brick piers and concrete block rows. The south façade features four one-over-one double-hung windows spaced at irregular intervals. The carport addition (c. 1975) has a side-gable roof with ornamental metal poles that rest on a low brick wall. The carport has a four-rise, concrete step that leads to the east-facing porch. An interior brick chimney is visible on the peak of the roof on this façade.

The interior retains its original trim consisting of simple baseboards, and door and window trim. Most of the original hardware to the doors is still intact. The interior contains vertical board and historic four panel doors. There are four fireplaces that have been covered over and are no longer utilized.

The main entryway, located on the east facade of the house, leads to a central hall that runs east-west through the house. The hall, which has wood flooring, provides access to two front rooms, a dining room, and a rear bedroom. The two front rooms are similar in their materials and design features. Each has a closed off fireplace with a plainly designed wood mantel and a brick hearth is visible on the west wall. The mantel has pilasters with decorative molding supporting a simple mantelshelf. The southeast room has hardwood flooring, while the northeast room has carpet over the hardwood flooring. The walls in each room are covered with drywall.

On the northwest end of the hallway is the back bedroom that contains a closed-off fireplace on the east wall with a plainly designed wood mantel and brick hearth that is similar to the ones found in the front rooms. The room contains hardwood flooring and drywall. A bathroom having a tile floor, converted in 1970 by using a portion of the rear porch, is located south of the back bedroom.

The dining room area, located on the southwest end of the hallway, has a modern tiled floor, a closet, and a closed-off fireplace with a plainly designed wood mantel and brick hearth that is similar to the ones found in the front rooms.

West of the dining room is the kitchen area, which has a tiled floor and is finished with wood paneling on the walls. The tiled floor and finished wood paneling were installed in 2006. Doors on the north wall of the kitchen lead to the c. 1970 enclosed back porch and pantry area. The c. 1970 pantry is finished with wood floor and beaded board walls.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 3

Robertson Family Farm  
Hardeman County, Tennessee

## 2. Tenant Home, (1933) Contributing building

Built by the Robertson family in 1933, this ell shaped, side-gabled frame home is a one-story building with a concrete block pier foundation and weatherboard siding. The building features an exterior chimney and an asphalt shingle roof. The eaves contain exposed rafter ends.

The west, front, façade has a porch supported by four plain wood posts. The central wood door is flanked on each side with two-over-two double-hung windows. The porch is elevated on concrete piers with three steps leading to the porch. The north façade contains the exterior chimney and a metal frame door is located on the rear ell of the building. The east façade of the main block of the house has a two-over-two double-hung window. The east façade features an extended wing with two two-over-two double-hung windows. The northernmost window has a crimped metal awning. The south façade contains two two-over-two double-hung windows. The east window is half the size of the west window. The siding on south façade was replaced with aluminum in 1980.

The interior of the tenant home consists of wooden floors and gypsum board walls. The layout is very simple with a hallway leading to four rooms. The house has had little interior alterations since it was built.

## 3. Storage Shed, (1944) Contributing building

Located on the west side of Newsom Road, this shed is located 100 feet west of the 1906 Home House. The exterior of the shed is a mixed-grade vertical and horizontal wood siding. The roof has a low pitch gabled roof with crimped metal shingles.

## 4. Barn, (Moved to this location 1975) Noncontributing building

Located on the west side of Newsom Road, this formerly abandoned house that was originally located on another farm on Newsom Road, south of May Road, was moved to this location in 1975 and is located 1000 feet west of the storage shed. The exterior of the barn is tin siding. The side gabled roof is covered with tin.

## 5. Storage Building (1930) Contributing building

Located on the east side of Newsom Road, this building is located 100 feet north of the tenant home. This two-story storage building with a dimension of 60 ft by 20 ft holds hay and corn on the top level and the bottom level stores all mechanical equipment and tools.

## 6. Modern Home (1964) Noncontributing building

Located on the west side of Newsom Road, this one-story brick ranch home is located 250 feet south of the House Home. The north half of the east, front, façade has two side-by-side single garage doors with transom

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 4

Robertson Family Farm  
Hardeman County, Tennessee

windows. The east façade has a quarter porch off-center towards the south with four porch support beams. To the north of the porch is a full-height 12-pane window. There are also three windows on the east façade that are six-over-six double-hung sash, two are on the south side of the porch, and one is located on the north half of the facade.

## 7. Landscape Features, Contributing site

The Robertson Family Farm's landscape is that of an operating farm with fields open for crops and grazing animals. The farm has evidence of an old road on the west side of Newsom Road and north of the House Home, which leads to the furthest west and north parts of the farm. The foundation remnants of a house that was utilized by the Robertson family prior to the construction of the house home is located north of the dirt road. The farm has a man-made (c. 1952) pond that was utilized on the farm. There also existed two separate orchards. One orchard, which was an apple orchard, was located on the west side of Newsom Road and was located north of the pond. The second orchard, which was a pear orchard, was located on the east side of Newsom Road near the road. The farm's boundary and field patterns have gone through very little change after the last section of land was bought in 1904.

Although the property has not been evaluated for the possible presence of archaeological deposits, there is a possibility of finding deposits on the property. In particular the site of the former house and the orchards may provide historic artifacts.



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 5

Robertson Family Farm  
Hardeman County, Tennessee

## Statement of Significance

The Robertson Farm is being nominated under the National Register Criterion A for its local significance in African American ethnic heritage as it relates to agriculture. This property has been a continuous working farm within the same family for over 100 years and is a rare surviving example of a historic African-American owned farm. The farm was begun by Crawford Robertson who was born into slavery in Arkansas. Following emancipation Robertson was able to purchase a notable amount of land and run a successful farm. The grandson of Crawford Robertson, Evelyn Robertson, currently owns the property and continues to farm with the help of a cousin, A.J. Robertson and a lessee, Alan Ferguson.

Whiteville, Tennessee started out with the opening of a trading post around 1800 by Dr. John White of Virginia; subsequently this is how the name Whiteville came about. The town was originally situated about two miles from the current position of Whiteville's business center. The town became incorporated in 1854 then moved to its current location by 1888 when the North Carolina and St. Louis Railroad was built. According to census records, since 1830, Hardeman County had free African Americans living in the area. The census records also show that Hardeman County was in the top 25 percent of counties that owned the most slaves in the state of Tennessee.

Crawford Robertson was born a slave on April 4, 1856 in Arkansas, but by the time he reached nine years of age, the issuance of the Emancipation Proclamation transformed African American slaves to be freemen. At a later time, Crawford, his mother, and sister migrated to Hardeman County from Arkansas. Finally at the age of 32, Crawford Robertson started purchasing property. The Robertson Farm is comprised of three separate purchases of land. The first land purchase, 75 acres took place in December 1888. The second 21-acre purchase was on January 25, 1896. The third and last purchase, 100.05 acres was on January 25, 1904.

Crawford Robertson's birth circumstances (born into slavery), his upbringing, and his early adulthood provided him with skills needed to make a new life for himself and his family. Those skills, which included farming and carpentry, helped him establish a family farm. After the farm was established, Crawford's carpentry skills allowed him to build the family home by 1906. Finally, a tenant home was built in 1933; this allowed tenant farmers to live, establish themselves and finally purchase their own farms.

The Robertson Farm supported and sustained the needs of the Robertson family largely due to the diverse and varied crops and produce raised there. Agricultural crops produced included cotton, corn, milo (grain used as feed for animals), sorghum, and hay for feeding the animals. Many of these same crops continued to be raised on the farm throughout its history. Today the farm produces mostly corn and cotton. Animals that were raised on the Robertson Farm included hogs, chickens, mules, horses, and cows. Vegetable gardens and fruit orchards were all a part of the array of produce on the farm. There were two orchards, an apple orchard and a pear orchard. One pear tree that is still producing fruit exists and is over 80 years of age. Canning and the preservation of meats by the use of a smoke house were integral parts of the farm regimen.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 6

Robertson Family Farm  
Hardeman County, Tennessee

during the lifetime of Crawford and Cora Robertson. Crop rotation and the use of terraces to control erosion were also practiced on this farm.

The farm started after Robertson's first land purchase in December of 1888. In most areas of the South, it was rare for African-Americans to own land and establish farms at this time. During this general time frame (c. 1877 – 1899) future President Rutherford B Hayes agreed to remove federal troops from the South in return for support for his presidential campaign. After winning the election, President Hayes removed troops from the southern states, which started sweeping laws that changed African-American rights to being separate but equal. The state of Tennessee was no different and started its own set of segregatory laws towards African Americans involving education (primary and secondary), marriage (between an African-American and an Anglo-American), and public accommodations (hotels and railways).

During this time, Crawford Robertson was able to purchase his first 75 acres (from W. E. Farley and his wife) of land for five hundred sixty-two dollars and fifty cents; he was able to put down two hundred dollars in cash on November 6, 1886; by December 1, 1888 he had paid the full amount. While farming his land, he was able to raise enough cash money to continue to buy property until 1904 when the last of the acres was bought for this farm. This is significant since at the time the farm was growing, Crawford Robertson likely would have had to purchase the land with cash on hand, since the banks at that time rarely gave loans to African-Americans. Though when Evelyn Robertson was splitting the land so he could build his brick ranch home in the early 1960s there was a loan to a Federal Land Bank in Louisville, Kentucky; this leads to the conclusion, that at least one institution did allow Crawford Robertson to borrow money at some point before he passed away.

The period 1900 to 1930 encompassed The Industrial Era, World War I and the Postwar Boom. This was a time when many farmers lost their land and many African-Americans left the south to go to the industrial north for better paying jobs and better living situations. Hardeman County, however, did not appear to have a large exodus at this time. This is not to say that the time was any less hard for these individuals during this tumultuous time. More Jim Crow laws were enacted which furthered the separation of African-Americans from Anglo-Americans which included more restrictions towards education and public/private transportation.

According to census data, the number of farms operated or worked by African-Americans in Hardeman County numbered over 1300 in 1900; by the time 1930 came around, this number was over 1400 farms. However relatively few of these farms were actually owned by African-Americans. The 1910 census reports that of the 3602 total farms in the county, only 237 were owned by African-Americans.<sup>1</sup> When this is compared to other counties it is found that Hardeman County had more African-American farms than most other counties in the state. As a region, the southwest Tennessee counties of Fayette, Hardeman, Haywood,

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<sup>1</sup> Historic Census Browser. University of Virginia Library: GeoStat Center: Collections. June 2005.  
<http://fisher.lib.virginia.edu/collections/stats/histcensus/index.html>

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 7

Robertson Family Farm  
Hardeman County, Tennessee

Lauderdale, Madison, Shelby, and Tipton contained a proportionally higher number of African-American owned farms than other regions in the state.

During 1930 to 1940 the Great Depression and World War II came to the forefront of the American History timeline. This time in US history gave way to the New Deal programs of President Roosevelt to World War II, where many African-American men were going off to fight in the war. This was a time of discrimination in federal programs that were aimed towards farmers. The Agricultural Adjustment Administration gave subsidy payments to large land-owning southern farmers. These farmers were to have distributed the money to tenant farmers and sharecroppers. At that time mainly African-American farmers were tenant farmers and sharecroppers, and they did not end up with any money. The Federal Emergency Relief Administration was also created to help poor, rural Americans. African-American farmers rarely ended up with any of the relief as the aid normally went to white farmers. During the late 1930s to early 40s another government program was created called the Farm Security Administration that gave loans to tenant farmers to purchase their own farms. Finally, the war took such a precedence that able men were needed to fight and women were needed to work in factories. This second exodus led many African-American farmers to the North for better jobs or overseas to fight. Hardeman County African-American farmers were a part of this exodus losing their farms by different means, one being if they were one payment late on taxes, the land would immediately be foreclosed on and subsequently bought by a white farmer. In 1940 over 1000 farms operated or worked by African-Americans were existing in the county.<sup>2</sup> At this time around the Robertson Farm there were seventeen African-American farms; while nine Anglo-American farms were in that specific area.

Crawford Robertson was important to this community, not only because of his contribution to the farming aspects of the community, but also because of his leadership and his tenacity in helping establish a Rosenwald school in 1918, known as the Allen-White School (NR 11/9/2005). Even though Crawford and his wife were not formally educated, they used their resources from the farm to support education for the African-American children in the community. Crawford Robertson was the treasurer of the organization responsible for the funding of the Allen-White School. To enhance the fundraising efforts, he and one of his daughters, Myrtle Robertson, would travel throughout the community by buggy canvassing the community for funds to support the school building program (circa 1918-1923). Mr. Crawford's name is listed on the cornerstone as the treasurer. The importance of education to Crawford is further indicated by the fact that he sent three of his children to high school in Nashville and Shelby County before educational opportunities were available in Hardeman County. His children went on to further their education at Lane College (NR 7/02/1987) and Tennessee A & I (now Tennessee State University) (NR 6/14/1996).<sup>3</sup>

The tenant home was built in 1933 for tenant farmers. There have been five tenant farmers who lived in the tenant home and farmed the land. The current tenant farmer has been living there for almost fifty years. The

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<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Tennessee Century Farms. Center for Historic Preservation. October 2004. "Robertson Farm". <  
[http://histpres.mtsu.edu/centfarms/hardeman\\_county/#Robertson\\_Farm](http://histpres.mtsu.edu/centfarms/hardeman_county/#Robertson_Farm)>.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 8

Robertson Family Farm  
Hardeman County, Tennessee

arrangements for the tenant farmer has been that half the proceeds goes to the tenant farmer and half to Crawford Robertson and subsequently to Evelyn Robertson as current owner of the farm. Two of the tenant farmers, one being Norman Rhodes, went on to purchase small farms in the Whiteville area. Norman Rhodes started as a tenant farmer on the Robertson farm but by the 1940s had gone and purchased his own farm. Norman Rhodes did not purchase his land through the bank, because at the time (late 30s, early 40s) the local bank president, Robert Bass, would not loan money to these African-American farmers. Instead, according to Norman Rhodes, he said, "you don't need to own your own farm, just go and work for a good white farmer."<sup>4</sup> This type of attitude was all too prevalent throughout the South.

Three generations of the Robertson family have now lived on and tended the family farm. The second generation, consisting of seven children and their spouses, inherited the farm in 1938, when Crawford Robertson passed away. They were Guy and spouse Neila, Johnny, Vivian and spouse Dora, Elnora and spouse Bob, Myrtle, and Evelyn and spouse Pearl. The farm continues to be operated under the third generation in much the same fashion as when Crawford Robertson ran the farm.

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<sup>4</sup> Norman Rhodes. Personal Interview. 19 July 2007.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 9

Robertson Family Farm  
Hardeman County, Tennessee

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- United States. Tennessee. Hardeman County. Deed Book KK. Pg 178. January 25, 1896.
- United States. Tennessee. Hardeman County. Deed Book PP. Pg 119. January 25, 1904.
- "Whiteville – Founded Early 1800's" 2005-06 Hardeman County Guide.

United States Department of the Interior  
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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 10

Robertson Family Farm  
Hardeman County, Tennessee

## Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated boundary for the Robertson Family Farm consists of parcels 10.00, 18.00, 18.01, 18.02, 18.03, 19.00, and 21.00 located on attached tax map 030. The scale of the map is 1"=800' and is the best available for this area.

## Boundary Justification

The nominated parcels represent the property that was historically and currently owned and operated by the Robertson family.



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number PHOTOS Page 11

Robertson Family Farm  
Hardeman County, Tennessee

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## Photographs

Robertson Family Farm,  
Whiteville, Hardeman County, TN  
Photographs by: Renee Tavares  
Southwest Tennessee Development District  
27 Conrad, Suite 150  
Jackson, TN 38305

Date: March 9, 2007

House Home, east façade, facing west  
1 of 24

House Home, east façade, facing southwest  
2 of 24

House Home, north façade, facing south  
3 of 24

House Home, west façade, facing east  
4 of 24

House Home, west façade, facing southeast  
5 of 24

House Home, west façade, facing east  
6 of 24

House Home, enclosed porch on north façade, facing south  
7 of 24

House Home, west façade, facing east  
8 of 24

House Home, south façade (west end), facing north  
9 of 24

House Home, south façade (east end), facing north  
10 of 24

**United States Department of the Interior**  
**National Park Service**

# **National Register of Historic Places**

## **Continuation Sheet**

Section number PHOTOS Page 12

Robertson Family Farm  
Hardeman County, Tennessee

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House Home, south façade (carport), facing north  
11 of 24

House Home, southeast corner, facing northwest  
12 of 24

House Home, northwest room, facing north  
13 of 24

House Home, dining room, closed off fireplace, facing east  
14 of 24

House Home, kitchen, facing northwest  
15 of 24

House Home, kitchen, facing south  
16 of 24

House Home, pantry, facing northeast  
17 of 24

Barn, facing northwest  
18 of 24

Tenant Home, west façade, facing east  
19 of 24

Tenant Home, southwest corner, facing northeast  
20 of 24

Tenant Home, south façade, facing northwest  
21 of 24

Tenant Home, east façade, facing west  
22 of 24

Tenant Home, north façade, facing south  
23 of 24

Pear Tree, east side of Newsom Road



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National Park Service

# **National Register of Historic Places**

## **Continuation Sheet**

Section number PHOTOS Page 13

Robertson Family Farm  
Hardeman County, Tennessee

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24 of 24